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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/723,318

11/25/2003

Murtuza Lokhandwalla

135858

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08/04/2006

GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY
GLOBAL RESEARCH
PATENT DOCKET RM. BLDG. K1-4A59
NISKAYUNA, NY 12309

EXAMINER

CHENG, JACQUELINE

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3768

DATE MAILED: 08/04/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/723,318

Applicant(s)

LOKHANDWALLA ET AL.

Examiner

Jacqueline Cheng

Art Unit

3768

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 November 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-22 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 25 November 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 10/25/04, 3/24/05
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

2. **Claims 1-5, 8-19, 21, 22** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by US Publication No. 2004/0010193 A1 (herein referred to as Entrekina et al.). Entrekina et al. discloses a breast imaging system comprising compression plates for retaining a breast during an examination. One of the compression plates, which can be movable to apply a downward compression force (paragraph 0010), is formed by a polymeric membrane stretched under tension to provide a rigid but compliant surface (to allow for variation in size and shape of the tissue to be compressed). This surface can be either substantially acoustically transparent for the conduct of a sonographic examination or radiographically transparent for the conduct of a mammographic examination (abstract). The lower compression membrane is held under tension, up to the tensile strength (tautly) of the polymeric sheet, in at least one dimension. The compression membrane is held by a support frame (fig. 2, element 32) which also supports the front, back, and side tensioning apparatus (fig. 2, elements 52, 64, 56). These tensioning apparatuses provide a mechanical command through screws in the frame that push the tension

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bars outwards against the membrane, increasing the tension of the membrane on the compression plate across the opening in both orthogonal directions (paragraph 0016-0018).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 6, 7, and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Entrekin et al. as applied to claims 1 and 15 above, and further in view of US Patent No. 6,243,484 B1 (herein referred to as Godik).

5. **Claim 6:** Godik discloses a non-rigid object holder assembly for use in examination of an object such as a breast. The holder assembly can be used in a mammoscopy system for performing accurate breast cancer screening. The breast is placed between two membranes, one of which is an inflatable bag that is inflated by a pneumatic unit that controls the pressure in the bags, creating tension (col. 3 line 1-25). It would be obvious to one with ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine Entrekin et al. with Godik as both inventions are directed to an apparatus for compressing tissue to be scanned for medical imaging with a tensile membrane.

6. **Claim 7:** Godik discloses the membrane film having a thickness of 30-150 um (col. 5 line 14-27).

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7. **Claim 20:** Godik discloses an inflatable bag, pressure filled. Although Godik does not expressly disclose the bag being inflated hydraulically, it would be a design choice as to how to apply the pressure to the bag. It would be obvious to one skilled in the art to provide pressure hydraulically versus pneumatically.

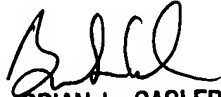
Conclusion

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jacqueline Cheng whose telephone number is 571-272-5596. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 9:00-5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eleni Mantis-Mercader can be reached on 571-272-4740. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

JC


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